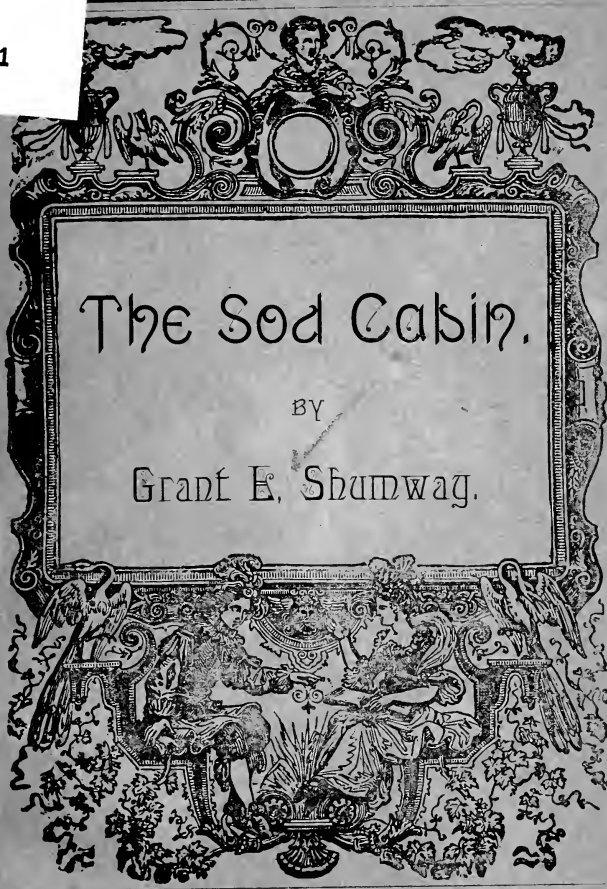


S 2829
S25
copy 1

PS 2-27
S 25



The Sod Cabin.

BY

Grant E. Shumway.



THE SOD CABIN.

by

Grant E. Shumway.

A Poem of Five Parts.

- | | | |
|------|------|--------------------------|
| PART | I. | THE PRAIRIE ROSE. |
| " | II. | A DESERTED HUT. |
| " | III. | GRAZY WOMAN CANYON. |
| " | IV. | WHITE HAIR AND DEERFOOT. |
| " | V. | THE MOUNTAIN LASS. |

ADVOCATE, ASHFORD, NEBRASKA.



PS 2829
525

This thrilling tale relates the lot
Of four, by fortune cursed and blessed,
Who dwelt in a sequestered spot
Among the mountains in the west.
Each part alone, contains a story,
Unknown to fame, obscure from glory.

THE PRAIRIE ROSE.

PART FIRST.

THE PRAIRIE ROSE.

Hark! What sound is that which breaks
Upon the stillness of the morn;
The mountain's echo startling wakes,
Re-echoing to the hunter's horn.
From 'mong the timber, sprang the deer
And bounds along the mountain sides,
Then stops, the sound once more to hear,
To tell from whence it came, he tries.
Cautiously up the hill advances,
Its ken among the tall straight pines;
Then down the narrow glen it glances.
With dense brush, filled, and wild grape vines.
With ears acute and head erect,
It watches both the hills and dale,
As if a hunter to expect:
Nor did its expectations fail.
A sharp sound on the clear air rang.
Close by its head a bullet sang.
This told the hunters hiding place
Was 'neath the shelter of a crag;
So down the canyon bounds the stag;
While gay pursuers, swiftly chase.
Over the frosty, crystal snow,
O'er rocky chasms, rough and deep,
Around the bend a mile below

It went with easy swinging leap.
At a clear spring, it stopped and quaffed
A hasty but refreshing draught.
When from the water it had drank
Enough, it bounded up the bank
And turned broadside, stood looking back
Upon its hasty beaten track,
Until upon a fiery steed,
Which by two deep-mouthed hounds, is led,
The hunter 'round the curve, with speed
Came; and upon its trail, he sped.
Another sharp vibrating blast
Resounds: and down the canyon grand
He saw another hunting band,
Which that way came and riding fast.
It waits no more nor stands in view
But fled, while huntsmen swift pursue.
Now striving to escape from sight
By veering to the left or right,
And many a chasm does impede
Its progress, lessening its speed,
And many a boulder in its way
Compelled its rapid course to sway.
Each bound, the cold incentive feels
The hunters were upon its heels.
The dismal blood-hounds chorus rings
And startles precipice and rocks.
Each long drawn howl, seemed lending wings,
Each bay the quivering tendril shocks,
No lingering for a moment's breath
For 'twas a race of life or death,
Beneath the snow encumbered pines,
Now tangled in the hanging vines;

'Neath cedar trees, through briar and brake;
The tumult does the hills awake.
Over hill-top, down the glen,
Then climbs the mountain side again.
Its height is reached, one look again
Then off o'er table-land and plain.
And from their course the wild birds fly,
Jack rabbits speeding swiftly by,
The buzzards soaring far and near,
Watched first the running, frightened deer
Then the pursuing chevalier;
For only one was in the race,
Of all that once had given chase.
This was a high-born Eastern swain
Who sought wild life upon the plain.
He ne'er before had hunted deer,
And little knew their wary ways;
He'd heard those tales we oftentimes hear
While sitting by the camp fire's blaze.
Will Curtis severed every tie
That bound him to an Eastern home.
The longing impulses to roam
Had dragged him 'neath the Western sky.
Long had the game passed from his view,
Its trail he followed o'er the snow,
Swift as the winds that come and go,
How far the huntsman little knew.
Three times he saw the prize that day,
It was ahead and far away
And on a ridge stood looking back
To see if he was on its track:
Each time it saw him on the plain,
Each time went running on again.

How long should he continue on?
He gazed at the declining sun;
Saw the approach of eventide.
He pats his foam flecked pony's side,
Its flowing mane he gently strokes,
Then forward on the trail he looks
And started, for quite near he spied
The object of his weary ride.
It started too, again it fled
And down a narrow canyon led;
Excitement had begun anew.
He plies the rowels to his horse,
Urged by the spur his courser flew
Unwavering from its course.
Yet with the deer he kept no pace,
But still continues in the race.
The horse, its strength, now well nigh spent
No longer ground the fretted steel
Its fiery pace slow did relent
The rowel, scarcely seemed to feel.
The rider to its reeking side
The stinging whip, with vigor plied;
The jaded steed urged to pursue
Till burst on his astonished view
The prettiest place in all the land
Dame Nature's home, a canyon grand.
Rose Prairie, which before him lay
A crystal mantle was upon;
The setting sun at close of day
A thousand stars, reflecting shone.
Across this plain the deer had gone,
Across the plain he followed on;
And charging through the ten-foot brake

Went hound and hunter after beast,
'Till right before them lay a lake
Which stretched far to the West and East.
'Twas frozen o'er, with but a crust
And broken where the deer had crossed;
Among the brakes and in the wood
That grew upon the other shore
Plunged panting deer, but not pursued;
The weary band gave chase no more.
The hunter to the waters brink
Kneit down and took a hearty drink,
His horse, with nostrils swelling wide
Stood panting, trembling by his side,
When he arose; while to his feet
His hounds came whining, worn complete.
The sun had set, the evening sun
Behind the hills, the chase is done.
No food for horse or hound or man,
His situation now began
At last, to dawn upon his mind.
"Where am I now," the huntsman cried.
"I for adventure often sighed
In days gone by, but now I find
Its pleasures but a fancied dream,
A vision fair, a fabled theme,
For which the passionate heart of youth
Would not yearn if it knew the truth.
Where will I pass the thickening night?
How anxiously I'll wait for light.
Some snowy bank my bed shall be,
For covering a cedar tree,
My saddle blanket 'round me fold,
My saddle to support my head,

Lie down to perish here, of cold;
Adventure gay, thy pleasure's dead!"
His weary horse, to graze, he tied,
His weary hounds laid down beside,
Among the rocks he takes a look,
He finds therein a sheltered nook.
The cold hard stones should be his bed,
A rock projecting overhead.
Though cold the couch in which he'd lain
Yet peace and slumber o'er him crept.
When nearly dawn, flashed thro' his brain
Wild fancies as he dreamed and slept.
He dreamed that waking in the dawn
He found his noble steed was gone.
Upon the snow his hounds lay dead
And he alone, was in the wood:
He took the horse's trail that led
Away and followed as he could
Out of the woods, across the plain.
And in the briars and brakes again:
It crossed a sparkling stream where play
Respondent to the sunlight ray,
Reflecting colors, from the spray.
But where this murmuring stream he crossed
Somehow, the pony's trail he lost.
While struggling on the bushes through
He found a footprint in the snow,
A human trail.

He started back
"My eyes decieve, my fears abound,
It can,t be possible I've found
Within this brush a woman's track:
A woman in this desolate wild,

A maiden scarce more than a child"
And starting up he followed on
The way the maiden's track had gone.
With mystic feelings, strange and queer
Far, far away his ken he cast,
To where the rugged hillsides rear
Their columns to the East and West.
Upon a plain that stretches near
He saw a maid:—the vision passed.
He 'woke, he 'rose, for it was dawn
When lo! His horse was truly gone.
His hounds lay dead, the snow upon.
His dream was topmost in his mind
The horse's trail he sought to find.
They trail, the brakes, the flashing stream,
All passed as they had in the dream.
The maiden's footprints in the snow
Were followed down the narrow glen.
He looked ahead and stopped, for lo!
There was the maiden on the plain.
With careless grace she sauntered on
Sung snatches of some joyous song,
Like one who never knew of wrong.
Then passed beneath a grove.—"She's gone.
This surely is no dream; who knows,
But I have seen the Prairie Rose?
How curious, how strange, that he
Should find this maid within the wild,
And wondered where her home might be,
Or if she was "Nobody's Child."
Or if mayhap, she was the one,
Of whom he'd heard old hunters tell.
Whose skill with pistol, knife or gun

No border rustic could excel.
She fearless came to the frontier
Civilization left behind;
The place for antelope and deer,
It was the place she sought to find.
Could this light stepping little fairy
Be that fearless, dauntless one
Whose appellation far was known
As the Wild Rose upon the prairie?"
'Twas thus he mused, while following on
The way the lovely maid had gone.
'Till pushing through a cedar wood
Suddenly comes an open space
In which a small log cabin stood.
It was indeed a home like place;
Four walls were laid up eight logs high
And cedar poles and boughs and hay
Performed the part of canopy,
On which a fleecy cover lay.
A portico one end doth grace;
'Twas made of rough hewn poles and hay:
While at the other a fire place
Was built of sods, stones, rocks and clay.
One window small and one small door
To which the maid's track led before.

He was enchanted with the spot,
And briskly walked across the lot
And knocked; a voice within replied:
"Come, stranger, come, and welcome here."
The cabin door was opened wide,
He saw within, an aged seer,
A gentle dame, a kindly sire,
All sitting by a cozy fire.

The lady he had seen before
Was standing holding wide the door.
Not long upon the porch he staid
But made obeisance to the maid,
Then bent to pass within the door
Upon a soft and tufted floor.
A carpet of deer skins was made
And on the earthen floor was laid,
While skins of wild beasts, tanned and dried,
Hung on the walls on every side,
And knives and guns all hung in place,
Which told their life was of the chase.
He sat before the glowing fire
Conversing with the seer and sire;
The dame and maiden, here and there
Flitted, a breakfast to prepare.
While he to them related o'er
Experience of the day before.
He told of his long weary ride
Of loosing deer at eventide,
His dream upon his stony bed
His pony gone, his hounds were dead.
Without a steed, without a hound
The trail he took, the prairie o'er,
Until the maiden's track he found
And foliowed to the cabin door.
The old man cast a piercing glance
First at the youth then at the maid,
Then said,—“My lady now perchance
You'll look more careful when you're bade.
I told you when I woke this morn,
That if you would go to the lakes
You'd find a man sad and forlorn,

And girl, I never make mistakes.
You went, looked carelessly, came back,
The young man happened on your track.
Will told how once where fortune smiled
On him and 'round him fashion gay
He dwelt, but now was far away,
Had left all, for adventure wild;
The lively hunt, the joy it gives,
And yet the first deer he crossed
Had led him on 'till he was lost.
Still in his heart the pleasure lives.
Then spake the seer: "If 'tis for game
You have beyond the border come,
Rest now with us, you'll find the same;
You're welcome in our humble home.
Unless there's some unsevered tie
Binds to the friends which you have left."
Will thus replied him: "None will sigh,
Nor by my action will be miffed.
They said I was a tenderfoot
Because I knew not how to shoot.
They shot my bootheels while I danced
For them—their merriment enhanced;
I'm glad to bid their camp adieu,
I'm glad I'm welcome here with you,
This fair young maid with flashing ken,
With cheek where health so ruddy glows
Shall make of me a border man,—
And she shall be my Prairie Rose."
"Well, well," the aged seer replied,
The maid shall surely be your bride.
"But cautious be for there is one
Who soon will be here, you must shun.

He'll hate thee at his earliest sight,
Will challenge thee—urge thee to fight:
Refuse or he will kill the lad.
Remember now what I have said,
Do nothing to provoke his wrath,
Endeavor to keep from his path,
Evade his footsteps everywhere;
If for a while he hovers near
Just leave him undisputed here;
Evacuate the canyon fair.
And when you do evacuate
On leaving, you must separate,
Go by a various path.

Do not,
I pray, lament on leaving here
Though memory cherishes this spot.
You'll meet again so have no fear.
For sorrow in this vale must come,
Destroying happiness and home.
A gloomy curtain over all
Like sabled night shall fall."

He stopped—he gasped—fell from his chair—
A quivering trunk, lay trembling there;
The household gathered at his side,
While struggling violently, he died.
He never lived to tell the tale
Of severing hearts and sorrow deep;
A gloomy shadow o'er the vale
Fell and those left were left to weep.
They made for him no narrow grave;
A natural sepulcher was found.
His form was laid within a cave,
And stones were piled the entrance round.

Thus his remains they laid away.

Ere long the opening spring like boom
Dispelled the thickening, darkening gloom
And left the future bright as day.
Again there came the spring-like showers,
Again the various colored flowers.
The sweet voiced birds, the meadow lark's
Sweet lay is heard from dawn till dark.
Yet, to the maid all brought the strain
That back the cloud would come again.
The hunter often sat and talked
With her in merriment and glee;
They often through the forest walked
Or rested 'neath some shady tree;
And with elastic step, they take
Their course quite often to the lake;
Behind the willow bushes stand
While at their feet the foam flecked sand
Shone in the sun, while splashing o'er
It, ripples washed upon the shore.
Out on the waving, golden tide
The snowy swans would fearless ride
Upon its surface, free and gay,
The water dashing, scattering spray.
When stepping from their hiding place
The birds so tame they would not fly,
But sail away with matchless grace
While casting back a shining eye.
One day he turned, while overhead
A little bird, his story heard.
These rapturous words.

He trembling said,

That she was like the lovely bird,
For she was pure and sweet and fair
And with a matchless graceful air.
With cheek aglow and eyes cast down
She feigned surprise, but 'twas in vain,
Her waist his arm encircled round,
He kissed her o'er and o'er again.
But shyly from his arms she drew,
Her color quickly came and went;
Some struggle in her soul he knew
Was going on and soon would vent.
A half defiant look she gave
Then glanced across the glittering wave
And seemed absorbed in thought; nor could
He understand her attitude.
That form, that face, that raven hair!
It seemed none ever was so fair.
What strange resemblance does she bear
To one I knew long years ago.
Sweet Minnie Kemp, the village belle;
She disappeared, so sudden too,
What came of her no one could tell.
The village people lost their sense,
Went wild and searched both far and near;
She left a vast inheritance
Which relatives bequeathed to her.
I then was but a little lad,
But ne'er forgot the kindness shown
By this rich lady of the town
To people who but little had.
And I remember later came
A small, dark, wiry man, Ben Lane,

To the inheritance laid claim,
Endeavored hard his case to gain
But when the court's decision gave
His case no standing 'twas dismissed.
Ben's action proved he was a knave,
For through his close clenched teeth he hissed
Dire vengeance on the jurymen.
His sullen and vindictive look
As hitherward his course he took
Made many think he'd come again.
He never did.

Still for the heir
The property is waiting there.
How this young maid resembles her.
He scrutinized her as she stood
In that deep and reflecting mood.
The clouds and sunlight o'er her brow
Alternately were chasing now.
What was that battle in her soul
Which she was striving to control?
Convulsively her small form shook,
Then came a brave and resolute look!
'Twas over now and seemed to say:
"I'll do the right let come what may."

"Will," she began, "you know that you
Once told me of your fair haired lass,
What would she think poor girl? Alas!
It you in absence prove untrue.
Ah! This must never come to pass—
Go back to her—Come not to me—
Unless she kindly sets you free
Of her free will.

I cannot speak

The love I have for you, but ere
 I'd have you her engagement break,
 Let base dishonor your name share.
 I'd suffer pain no tongue could tell,
 My heart with anguish overflow,
 My life-blood break its prison cell
 And make a crimson flood for you.
 Go back to your fair Isabelle,
 Forget the wild girl in the dell."—
 One sad reproachful look she gave
 Him as she slowly turned to leave.

A stinging pain shot to his heart
 And pierced it like a quivering dart.
 His countenance was flushed with shame
 To join dishonor with his name.
 "Please Lilly do not leave me so,
 Your virtues I more highly prize
 On hearing what you've said.

But know,

Will Curtis will not tell you lies.
 So when I tell you I am free,
 Bound by no promises or ties,
 Perhaps you'll kindly think of me.
 Here, read this note." With trembling hand,
 He casts a letter on the sand
 Before her heavy downcast eyes.
 She picks it up— her eyes she dries—
 And reads the missive's contents through:

Viola, State of _____

March 27th, '75.

Will Curtis:

Sir.— I freely give
 You back the longed for liberty,

Am glad to know that I am free.
Our promises were premature
And brought about by other hands.
Neither are satisfied I'm sure
While our engagement stands.
Like you, my heart for freedom yearned
Until you did that freedom send.
With this your kindness I've returned.

Remember me

Your sincere friend

Belle Morton.

“Will, another star
Shall guide my future, brighter far
Than any I have ever known
Save one, and that from Heaven shone.
This letter has revealed to me
Your noble heart, and that it's free.
So if on me, unworthy me,
You would its tenderness bestow,
I'll gladly give my heart to thee,
You'll gently care for it I know.”

Again he clasped her to his breast
And joyous, rapturous kisses pressed
To her sweet lips upturned to his
As if to seal eternal bliss.
While standing thus in close embrace,
Her face upturned to meet his face.
Some power seemed to bear away
Her mind in which bright visions play.
A stately mansion on a hill
In which were dwelling her and Will.
Rich paintings on the frescoed wall,
Lace drapery and curtains fall,

The rustling silk, the marble floors,
While servants came at her command,
Their footsteps heard on every hand
Resounding through the corridors.
The mist floats from before her eyes,
'Twas but a dream of paradise.

 Their future sealed their homeward way
 They step with hearts so light and gay.
 Not long their happiness unmarred
 Remained in sweet felicity:
 Soon by displeasure it was scarred,
 And followed by deep misery.
 One morning to a thicket by,
 The maiden wandered carelessly,
 With easy step, exultingly
 Repeating some sweet melody.
 Will seated was upon the grass
 Watching the disappearing lass.
 She passed from sight into the wood,
 He dropped into a musing mood.
 Was only 'wakened from his dream
 By hearing first a startling scream,
 And then a stifled smothered sound
 Which to the rescue made him bound,
 Arrived there just in time to see
 His darling treasure borne away,
 Borne on but with disputed sway
 For she was struggling to get free.
He forward sprang to strike the knave
Who faced about, one look he gave
At Will with that sharp, wicked ken.
Will stopped; behold, 'twas Scarface Ben.
"Ben Lane or my vision is vain."

“You’re right, Will Curtis, I’m Ben Lane.
Sir, I’m surprised at your appearing,
But with my plans no interfering
Or you’ll suffer for your blindness.”
One hand on his stiletto lingers.
The other holds the lady’s fingers.
“Wretch,” Will cried, “You have the kindness
To release the lady’s fingers;
To me unharmed the maid deliver
Or else your heart shall cease to quiver
At touching of this keen-edged knife.
Release her or release your life.”

He drew his glittering deadly blade
And sprang upon his wary foe,
Who loosed his hold upon the maid,
Compelled to let it go.
The maiden at this liberty,
Turned from the struggling men to flee,
But stopped behind a friendly bush
To watch the battle in the brush.
While with undaunted courage still
Will battled with scarface’s skill.
But Ben evades each deadly stroke;
Watching his chance gave Will a blow.
He dropped knife with yearful look
And fell before his wary foe.
Ben placed his foot upon his head.
Dipped in the blood his stiletto.
“Dead! Dead! My poor, poor Will is dead.
He died for me, unworthy me.
Oh! What a life I would have led
If he had not thus made me free.
Much rather I too should be dead

Than live in Ben's captivity.
Yet, with my dear Will lying dead
Life has no charm for me.
Off to the lake I'll hasten me
Within its waves resign my breath;
Its sandy bed my bed shall be;
We part in life, we meet in death.
But no,—that would be suicide,
My life, my hand shall end—no, never;
Although poor Will, for me has died,
I'll live in agony forever.
When her poor parents saw her face
Tear stained, and look of agony,
They ask her what had taken place,
She told her story brokenly.
The father took his favorite gun
Down from the rafters overhead.
"If I but see the other one
He too, shall die" he said.
The trio quickly wend their way,
To where the senseless William lay,
But Scarface Ben was there no more.
Deep in the forest he withdrew
He needed allies, now he knew
To bring success his steps before.
Poor Lillie knelt, Will's form beside
And laid his head upon her breast,
To stop the crimson flood she tried
As kisses on his brow she pressed.
No tears fell from her aching eyes.
No sobs welled from her stricken heart,
Benumbed are both. Those severed ties
Pierce like a poisoned, quivering dart.

And there she knelt, and none can know
The awful depth of tearless woe, .
Save those, who sometime suffered so.
"To think it was for me he died;
For me, his life, he freely gives,"
She said, but suddenly she cried
"He lives, he lives, he breathes, he lives!"
The crimson blood had ceased to flow,
The sands with it were deeply dyed;
The others knelt his form beside,
Found what she said was even so,
For he was faintly breathing now,
His breath came slow and painfully.
Faint color flushed upon his brow,
His muscles quivered constantly.
He opened those blue, tender eyes,
His vision seemed not fully clear,
His friends he seemed to recognize,
And faintly whispered, "Lillie, dear."
"My darling jewel! Oh my own—"
Then came a stifled, smothering moan.
And in low quavering tones, he said,
"Oh, take me to the cabin please."
A hold upon his form they laid
And bore him gently back, with ease:
He muttering incoherently,
While Lillie soothes him tenderly.
They laid him down upon a bed
They dressed his wound most carefully,
She took a seat close by his head
To watch his breathing prayerfully.
"From loss of blood," the old man said,
"He's faint, but then this little wound

Or gash, no vital spot hath found;
He's only weak from what he's bled."
The work was surely deeper wrought,
And Will was worse than he had thought.
The maid sat by him days and days
Before his consciousness returned,
The raging fever fiercely burned;
Naught could his sinking spirits raise.
Oh! Will he perish? No, the God,
That rules the world did not intend
He should thus die, but spared the rod
To save him for a better end,
Ere long the clutching iron hand
Released its grasp upon the man.
After the battle in the bush
Ben refuge took, within the brush.
And hidden 'neath its friendly shade
Dark plots and vicious plans he laid.
 " So I have found the place at last;
 Now my revenge will be complete.
 Yes I will spoil this pleasure sweet,
 A shadow o'er this valley cast.
 That maiden, she shall be my wife,
 That, do I swear upon my life.
 She does no not love me,—I am glad,
 For if the little creature had
 It surely would have drove me mad
 To be revenged upon the sire.
 I hate him and I hate his wife;"
 He muttered to himself with ire.
 " They dashed my hopes, blighted my life;
 That livid scar across my brow
 Came there, by whom, and when, and how,?

Why, by his hand, when to the earth
He crushed me in my native berth,
The fortune which was mine, I tho't,
He took from me by treachery,
And manfully I 'rose and fought,
Was whipped, aye he has beaten me.
My turn will come, just bear in mind,
But first some friendly aid I'll find.
That victim of my two edged sword,
Of course will put them on their guard,
I've settled him alright, I guess.
I've to encounter, now, one less."
He climbs the hill, the valley scans,
Then left to carry out his plans.
He muttered as aback he cast
A glance:—"My time has come at last."
We left Will in the cabin home
Recovering from his wound,
But days and days must go and come
Before his health is sound.
But when he had recovered quite
He hitherward, must take his flight;
For well they knew that Scarface Ben
Some evil hour would come again.
Thrice, while they dwelt in eastern climes
Matters they thought to reconcile,
But he accused them of great crimes
And answered them in language vile.
His presence now would cause them pain;
Their happiness he would harass;
Perhaps the parents would be slain,
That he might get the little lass.
Bear her away in shame to die

In his brutal captivity.
Alas! But they must leave their home
To seek another far away;
Once more the wide, wild prairies roam
And leave the canyon, flowered gay,
To seek the unknown west again,
To find some hidden mountain glen,
Toward the distant setting sun,
And human habitations shun.
Will was the first, who forth must roam
Perhaps, forever, they must part,
But here within this unny home
He leaves the sunshine of his heart.
"We know this seems a withering gale
To blight the tender plant of love
To bud no more, except above;
Yet by God's guidance on Life's plain,
The old man said we'd meet again,
Old Mascot's words will never fail.
Do you remember, Lillie, dear,
Those last words of the aged seer?
The full truth of those words we'll own,
But it may be in years to come,
When we around the Great White Throne,
In peace, at last, are gathered home.
I now must bid a fond adieu
Mayhap 'till o'er Life's shining river,
Yet my heart shall be true to you;
Farewell!—I trust 'tis not forever."—
Poor Lillian, the burning tears
Swift, chased each other o'er her brow,
As thoughts reflect on happy years.
And bright home circle, broken now.

The youthful fancies gilded bright,
Fair visions she had seen before,
All vanished, naught remained but night,
Her life a shadow passes o'er.

“Lillie, weep not, be brave and bold,
For ere the early morning sun
Shall tip the mountain tops with gold
Once more, I'll be a wandering one.
Yes, yes, farewell, for we must part,
Although it crushes each fond heart,
Upon a journey I must start.
And you too, Lillian must go;
Oh! when, if ever shall we meet?
Oh! will it be on earth below
Or Heaven in, where next we greet?
Now we must hope and watch and pray
And ever faithful to Him be,
The Savior leads us all the way,
We shall meet in Eternity.”

“Oh! must we sever, ever here
And never know those sacred ties,
Which has bound us for half a year,
Until we meet beyond the skies.”
“That in the book of life is found
If God's will leadeth us apart,
May He some balm pour in each wound,
Within each pierced heart.
Ha! see those gray streaks in yon sky
Foretell the wakening of day;
The morning breezes softly sigh,
I hear the merry lark's sweet lay.
Farewell! farewell my sweet wild flower
That blossoms in this hidden glen;

Oh! may God grant some happy hour
When we shall meet again.

The light comes reeling o'er the way;

Fairest of fair, divinest grace,

Adieu! For I must leave this place,

Farewell!—one kiss—then I'm away."

He's gone! the flowers cease to bloom.

And all the birds refuse to sing;

The joy the morning sun doth bring

Like dew has vanished, naught but gloom

Remains. Her sorrow deeper grows,

Her burning tears a torrent flows.

She wipes them dry and looks again

Across the undulating plain,

A lofty hilltop, Will has gained,

To see his love, his eyes he strained,

He stopped to wave a last farewell,

He waves his hand, a kiss he throws

Back to the cottage in the dell,

Back to his Prairie Rose.

And see! she stands amid the groves,

Her 'kerchief waving to and fro;

She throws a kiss to him she loves:

He waves his long and last adieu.

Oh! sad the parting of this twain,

Their pure young hearts thus rent asunder.

A sadder parting on the plain

Has ne'er occurred, God's vision under.

When two young hearts together blend

In tender love and unity,

Oh why will He some shadow send

And leave them both in misery,

To leave the future black as night,

The tender cords of love to sever,
The early hopes of youth to blight
Forever and forever.
Her light, her guiding star was gone,
The light of God, —the Sun,— shone on,
The gay stream chattered o'er its bed
Of pebbles:

While above her head
Flit singing birds and humming bee,
Yet all seemed empty mockery.
Her sorrow crushed her to the earth,
Again the bitter tears were shed,
She wondered why God gave her birth,
And wished that she were dead.
“Oh! why this lingering death should be,
Shall I—shall I—this blade of steel—
One blow my heart's blood will congeal.”
A glittering poniard from her breast
She drew when by this impulse pressed.
And raised the hand to strike the blow
To make her blood a fountain flow,
But her God stayed the death-like blow,
And paralyzed death's dealing hand;
With hand and face like driven snow
An icy statue does she stand,
With thankful heart, she silent praised
The guidance of the Heavenly Master,
She stood, her white arm still upraised,
Like monumental alabaster.
With greatfulness her soul imbued,
Remained she in this attitude,
Impressive, silent, motionless.
A moment still she lingered thus,

Then forward fell with one wild cry,
Betokening deep agony.

“Thank God! The wild fancy is o’er!
It thrills me to my bosom’s core,
To think that I,—though great the pain—
Would let the furies rule my brain.
My father, mother love me still,
And I love them as much as Will.”

As though with strength from Heaven sent
She ’rose and to the cabin went;
She cheerful, flitted to and fro,
Of many cares, her mother freeing,
For on the morrow, they must go,
Depart without Old Scarface seeing.

Ah! they should see the snow-capped heights;
The Rocky peaks, and there to roam
Amid those awe inspiring sights,
Where old Dame Nature makes her home.
Or they some mighty cliff would gain
And scan the landscape far and near,
To see gamboling o’er the plain
The careless antelope and deer.
When noonday sun so fiercely burns,
To rest beneath some jutting crag;
When Even, cool and fresh returns,
Again to chase the hunted stag.
To lead a life that ’s free from sin,
From sorrow and all cares and strife;
To taste the joy that ’s found within
The wild free air of mountain life.

’Twas night; the toils of day were done,
The trio to their cots were gone;

The sire and dame in dreams were lost
And breathing heavy sound and deep,
In restlessness the maiden tossed,
Her nerves unstrung, she could not sleep;
She paced the floor, then once again
Lay down with cool collected brain
And slept, but 'twas a troubled sleep,
To wake in fright and startled spring
Out on the floor, while cold chills creep
O'er her as she stood shivering.

The moon high up the Heavenly dome,
Shed her pale light around the home.
A few stray mellow moon-beams bright
Flooded the cabin with their light.

What makes me stand here suddering so,
There's naught to happen us, I know.
No gentle murmur of the breeze
Was heard, and not a leaflet stirred,
Not e'en the twitter of a bird
Came from their nests among the trees;
But through the night, so calm and still,
She heard a whistle, clear and shrill.
She bolts the door with sudden move,
Then springs to wake those whom she loves;
But ere her mission she had done,
Ere she was half across the floor;
Ten brawny men burst wide the door:
Old Scarface Ben had won.

Her parents wakened by her shrieks
And by the screaming, howling band,
Start from their cots, before them stand;
So frightened they—that neither speaks.

They seize the sire, his limbs they tie,
Then out into the darksome night,
They bore him from poor Lillie's sight;
She tho't they took him forth to die.

One Redman seized the trembling maid
She shrank beneath his iron grasp;
With effort strong she frees his clasp,
Stands dauntless, brave and undismayed.

“Ha! bold Ben Lane, that vile disguise
Only deceives the human eyes,
None can mistake that vicious grasp
When once they've felt its wicked clasp;
I thought it strange that Spotted Tail,
The noble chieftian of the Sioux,
Should ever in his friendship fail;
But now I find 'tis caused by you.”

“You hold me not, nor never can,
Though I'm a woman, you a man;
I care not which, many or few
Your numbers are, I'll never yield
And subjugate myself to you,
Nor bow beneath the rod you wield.”

“My blood a crimson fount shall be,
This is the blade to set me free.”
And quickly from her sheath she drew
A glittering dagger to their view.
With a strange, wild and maddened shriek
That made the very woodland start,
She strove to pierce him to the heart
And thus her vengeance wreak.

One blow she struck, another blow
Would surely lay her victim low.

The hand was raised, the blow it fell,
It was directed sure and well;
But ere it reached its destination
A hand had caused its arrestation.

So near to death, was Scarface pressed
The dagger's point had touched his breast:
She turned in fury on the man
Who thus had staid the falling hand,
And plunged the blade into his side,
He staggered back, and fell and died.

Another Redman siezed the maid
And raised aloft his heavy blade,
A fearful blow, with deadly aim
Towards her raven ringlets came;
But at this moment came a shrill
Wild shriek that rent the very air;
The creeping blood a tremor thrills,
At this sharp cadence of despair.

With maddened shriek and gesture wild
The mother sprang to save her child,
The rapidly descending blade
Struck her, and never harmed the maid.
She struggled back, with feeble moan,
Sank down upon her own hearthstone.
The maiden was not hindered now,
So to her mothers side she flew,
To press a kiss upon her brow.
Then bounded off, the doorway through.

A narrow pathway through the wood
She sprang along, fast as she could;
Pursuers chasing close behind,
Fleet-footed as the western wind:

She crossed the brook, she reached the lakes,
Concealed her-self among the brakes.

Far, far behind way down the glen
She heard pursuing, searching, men;
They nearer drew.

She trembling lay,
With-holding e'en her very breath,
Lest it her hiding place betray.
And give her to her foes and death.

They pass her by while curses deep
Their leader, Ben, upon them heap:
The man, who struck the blow which fell
The noble woman, cursed he well.

"To torture, would I gave to you
The man, and gave the woman, too.
Had you performed your duty well,
Captured the fair maid of the dell.

But now the woman you have slain,
The maid is free upon the plain.
The man with us we'll bear away.
To turn him loose some future day."
The voices fainter, fainter grew
As farther off the ruffians drew;
When all the sounds had died away
The maid arose from where she lay,
Naught but a thin night dress she wore,
This stained with mud and stained with gore;
With marble brow, and raven hair,
And eyes that told of her despair.

"Oh God!" she cried, "this bitter night!
Oh wretched, wretched is my plight;
I can but read my future doom,

Deeper, deeper grows the gloom.
I've nothing left to live for now."
Again the tears coursed o'er her brow.

"Yes, I must wander on this plain,
Upon the dreary, weary main.
On such sustenance, I must live
As roots and leaves and berries give;
Upon this kind of nutriment,
I'll try to find some settlement.
But if I perish on the way,
There in the bleaching sun I'll lay,
And rot;

Or else will form a feast
For cayotes or some hungry beast;
Great God! if this should be my lot!
I faint beneath the awful thought."
Her strength had fled, the mental strain
Was too great for her tender brain,
She forward reeled with feeble moan
And sank into a death-like swoon.

The sun was shining in her face
When she awoke;

A glance she cast,
A curious glance around the place;
Tried to recall that which had passed.
In vain, but still she knew that she
Was all alone and wild and free.
That she must search the plain and wood
For necessary food.

The dark foreboding, which before
Beset her brain had now passed o'er;
Her firm set features pictured, now.

Determination on her brow.

She turns, bids farewell to the lakes,
Bends, takes a drink, then leaves the brakes,
The tender plant, the Prairie Rose,
Upon her weary journey goes.
Why need we tell the suffering
That she endured while wandering.

All summer long she wandered wide,
Upon the bleak unbroken prairies;
Subsisted on roots, shrubs and berries;
Of hunger, often nearly died.

The Running Water and the Platte,
The Laramies and Sebil were passed.
She came to Horse Creek's narrow flat,
The mountains were in sight at last.
She wandered on for days and days
Until she stood the foothills by,
The Rocky Gap, a wondrous place,
With steep bare walls, all tow'ring high,
A flashing stream, a rugged trail,
Passed through the deep and narrow vale;
While Willow trees and Cottonwood
Along the water edges stood.
Beneath the bushes, to the east
Was hidden from the maid a feast,
The bushes now, before the maiden
With mountain fruit, were heavy laden.

When she had eaten quite enough.

She kept on picking berries off
And from her tattered gown, a rag
She tore and made a berry bag
This full of mountain fruit she tied

And started up the mountain side.

Its height was reached, she turned to scan
The valley fair, and saw a man
Who nearer, nearer drew.

The wild girl sought to hide from view,
So she ran down the mountain side
Within the Rocky Gap to hide.

And there behind a huge Pine tree
So that the hunter could not see
Her nakedness, she watched while he
Went riding through the narrow way;
She started at what met her gaze,
It brought back tho'ts of other days
When she a happy blithsome maid
Dwelt on Nebraska's sunny plain;
The canyon's walls so cold and gray
Along whose feet she often strayed;
Alas! but memory remains.

Unbidden tears bedim her eye;

She started up with a wild cry.

The man had dropped his bridle rein
Dismounted, left his horse untied,
The mountain summit sought to gain;
Came climbing up the mountain side.

The maid ran up the rocky ledge,
The hunter followed 'long its edge;
Below them yawned a chasm deep
With rugged walls both bare and steep;
Four mighty walls were towering high,
The blue sky made its canopy.

If he one step should miss, or her
'Twas death within this sepulcher;

But fearless on and up they fly.
Until a cave the the maid passed by;
As past the entrance, swift she sped
She saw within, a panther's head,
The wild beast sprang, from out its lair,
A swift shot rang through the air,
The beast rolled down the mountain side,
Fell in the sepulcher and died.
The now thoroughly frightened lass
Climbed up another fearful pass,
When Ben, the hunter, reached it there,
To follow farther did not dare.

“I sought to capture you; in vain,
He cried,—“for you are free again;
But I will tame you yet, my maid:
Or so endeavor, 'till I'm dead,
Or you my pretty one shall die.”

He looks up toward the azure sky;
There on a rock far, far above
Beheld the one for whom he strove;
Yes, she was leaning o'er the edge,
To watch the hunter on the ledge.
He shouts but scarce the echo hears
Until her fair head disappears.

“She's gone; pure as the mountain snows,
Free as the Western wind that blows,
A wandering maid, a wandering man,
The wife and mother has been slain.
My vow, I'll keep it if I can,

I'll see the maid again.”
His steps retraced, his horse beside,
He mounted it, resumed his ride.

The maid to get away was bent,
She noticed not which way she went,
And o'er a precipice she fell.
What seems incredible to tell,
She fell so hard, she made a dint
Within the rock; a perfect print
Of her small foot.

The truth we'll own,
The rock to clay was similar;
It after hardened into stone,
But left distinct, the foot-print there;
And to this day the track remains.

If e'er you loll in Nature's lap,
You search Wyoming's mountain chains,
You'll find it in the Rocky Gap.
But where her foot imprints the rock,
She forward reeled, so great the shock,
And fell again, at distance great,
On pine tree boughs she made her berth,
They gently bend beneath her weight
And drop her to the mother earth.
This fall, so grim and perilous,
Unscathed, unblemished left the miss.

As swift as ever hunted deer
Fled from a band of deep-mouthed hounds,
The maiden o'er the pebbles bounds,
Nor scarcely stops to see or hear,
She sped along Twin mountain base
Expecting that the man would chase,
Then deep into the forest glides,
Within a darkened fissure hides,
And rested from the race.

She buried in her hands her face

And wept;

When life but sadness knows,

What can a heart pour out in prayer:

So she, to Him, her bitter woe,

Poured out while hidden there.

She did not raise her eyes again

'Till darkness settled on the glen,

When e'er a twig would crackle near

The waif would start and shake with fear;

Whene'er would come a muffled sound

She feared some-one was lurking round.

"Oh God," she cried, "your wandering child

Rather than to that creature yield,

Would perish in this dreary wild

And furnish food for beasts of field.

Then her old home upon the plain

Came flashing through her mind again,

While all its pleasures, pictured bright,

Made this seem more than double night.

"Poor wandering father; where is he?

Poor mother; cold in death is she.

Poor Will: a broken hearted man

From me forever separate:

Oh! shall we never meet again?

Oh cruel, cruel, cruel fate!"

Then she would say, with lifted eyes;

"What are our feeble trials here

But richest blessings in disguise?

While over yonder all is clear;

Sweet rest beyond the skies.

Ah! when our trials here are o'er

We'll meet on yonder happy shore."

While meditating thus in peace
Her heart began to be at ease;
She crawled into the crevice deep
Gave up to pleasant peaceful sleep.

Which was indeed a boon.

'Twas in the stilly hours of night
When all the earth with mellow light
Was flooded by the tender moon.
The maiden doth in peace awake,
Looks out into the night and sees
Beneath the forest, through the trees
The glimmer of a crystal lake.
She left the crevice in the ledge
And sought the silver waters' edge
She stood upon the golden sand
Where land and crystal waters meet;
It was so pleasant thus to stand
The waters playing at her feet.
To reverie and musing given
First of the earth and then of Heaven,
In silence stood an hour or more
Upon that lonely lakelet shore.
The first grey streaks of coming dawn
Appeared above the horizon.

"Oh! welcome thou returning sun,
Your brightest ray shall glad me on,
'Till death, kind, welcome death, shall come,
Bear me sway to yonder home."

Within a cliff close at her left
Was found a rocky hidden cleft;
Within its dark recesses found
A roomy cavern, large and round;

Upon its floor, she prone doth lay
To wait the fast approaching day.

Within a cave not far away
A half a dozen robbers lay,
One man was watching her that night
As she stood in the moonbeams bright,
He watched the girl, —the wretched knave—
Until she passed within the cave;
Then silently his plans he kept,
And moved to where the robbers slept.

The morning sun shone o'er the land
When Scarface and his wicked band
Entered the cave, and gathered round
The maiden; she was sleeping sound.
"There never was one fair as she;
But let her rest in sweet repose,
Surprising will her waking be
To find I've caught the longed for rose."

When she awoke, a saddened pang
Shot to her heart as up she sprang,
She gazed with a bewildered stare,
Around at that vile grinning band,
Beheld no friends on either hand
But saw one fearful visage there;
Vindictive, unrelenting, cold
Malicious, vicious, wicked, bold;
Yes, hideous; like a monster beast
It gloated o'er its victory;
It gazed on her, with eyes that feast,
Like a wild beast upon its prey.

The monster seemed to grow more tall,
More broad, more hideous than before

A misty veil floats over all,
And she falls prostrate on the floor.
Once more upon the rocks she lay
Unconscious of the band of men;
Now muttering incoherently,
Now, struggling much as if in pain.
A given signal to the men
They from the cavern drew away,
Left her alone with Scarface Ben
Who staid to watch her as she lay.
When did her consciousness return
She only woke to weep and mourn,
In deepest anguish and despair;
White, silent, voiceless, sat she there.
To all who think their trouble deep
Are trials more than they can bear,
Just think of this poor young girl's share
Then o'er their sorrows cease to weep.
Ben told her not to weep and mourn,
He was a friend and not a foe.
A look of hate and bitter scorn
She gave, which seemed to say, 'I know.'
At this he drew him proudly up.
His eyes like wicked fireballs glare:
'I'll make you drink this bitter cup,
You'll marry me or perish here.'
With quickness to her feet she sprang,
In clear defiance her voice rang.
'You hissing snake, I'll surely die
Rather than marry you,' she said;
'For by your hand my mother's dead,
You caused me all this misery.'

Once dwelt I, in a happy home
Within a canyon, flowered gay,
But you into our midst would come,
To drive and scatter us away;
When I dwelt in that happy place.
A joyous blithsome maid was I;
You spoiled our happiness, Scarface,
So e'er I'll marry you, I'll die.

Yes, die, within this dreary wild,
But may your life be ever cursed,
You can destroy this feeble child,
I'll meet my fate, let come the worst.
By Heaven! 'till my limbs to stand
Refuse, you shall not touch my hand."

"Stand back!" in frenzy wild, she cried,

"Stand back; if you know when you're safe."
To grasp her hand in vain he tried,
To seize the maddened prairie waif.

"You,—man,—who stands there in the door,
Pray, in the name of God, defend me,
Or into Eternity send me
To save me from this monsters power.
You, sir, look to me like a friend,
And on your mercy I'll depend."

"Hold Senor," quickly said the man,

"An explanation, I demand,
Of this affair, and where you stand
Give it, and hasten if you can."

Bold Scarface turned, a moment dumb
Was stricken, that a man should come,
With him and his plans interfere;
He thought that they alone were there.

He hissed and cursed through clenched teeth,
Then drew a dagger from its sheath.
Bounded toward him at the door
As though to carve him limb from limb;
He got a blow that staggered him
And felled him senseless, to the floor.
Then from a rocky shelf, near by
Deerfoot, a bundle to the maid,
Tossed: "Quick, put on these clothes," he said,
"Together from this place we'll fly,"
She seized the bundle, it untied
And found within a huntsman's dress;
His object she could only guess,
But on his kindness, she relied.
She saw the chance for liberty,
Hastily donned the huntsman's clothes,
Sprang to a steed that stood close by
And ended the wild Prairie Rose.



PART SECOND.

THE DESERTED HUT.

It was an old log cabin, in
A dark and hidden mountain dell;
Within it sat a group of men
On whom a gloomy silence fell.
Their leader sat before the fire
And gazed into its mouldering blaze;
His lips would curl with bitter ire
When thoughts of disappointed days
Would come.

He was a low browed man,
With sharp black eyes and cheeks of tan;
A livid scar above the eyes
Of extraordinary size.
His heavy jaws, they picture true.
His bull-dog nature, through and through.
Disturb him not, the others would,
For he was in no pleasant mood.
They sat in silence round the room,
Around them gathered, dark, the gloom

While at one corner in a heap
A man was laying, breathing deep.
At last he roused and sitting there,
He looked with a bewildered stare
At those around, and fixed his gaze
Upon the leader of the men,
Who sat before the flickering blaze.
His wrongs before him, 'rose again;
In vain he tried to rise.

And found
His hands and feet securely bound.
Ben noticed him and with a curse,
He turned and told him to lie still,
Or he would make his fate much worse,
And give him to his men to kill.

"Ben;" thus the gray haired man began;
"There are some things which I must know;
Sir you must answer as a man.
Why am I caused this pain and woe?
Where is my wife and daughter too?
And what do you intend to do
With me?"

"Ha! Luther," Scarface said.
"I'll treat you now as you deserve;
I'll bind and leave you here to starve,
Until from hunger you are dead.
Then I'll drag you on the plain,
Let buzzards fatten on your brain;
Let coyotes rend your limbs asunder;
Or else will let you lie and rot;
Then from the place, away, I'll wander,
But leave your skull to mark the spot.
If e're again I pass it by

You know, the memory will be sweet;
I'll hail it with a joyful cry
For my revenge will be complete.
As for your wife, that Indian chief,
Her pain has given sweet relief:
I should have kindly saved the maid
And at her feet, a treasure laid,
But foolishly she from us breaks
Plunged madly in the crystal lake.
We dragged her from the waters cold,
And hanged her to a cedar tree."
Sir Luther sank back with a cry,
As Ben smiled at the lie he told.

"Well it were better thus," he said,
"The three of us will soon be dead.
She's better far, hung to that tree,
Than live in his brutality;
So I'm resigned.

On Earth's fair plain
We'll never, never meet again."
He sank down in in a death like swoon.
But when the light of morning shone
And struggled through the woods again;
He woke, to find himself alone,
From him, departed were the men.
Yet scarce awoke, until he hears
A muffled sound float to his ears.

What is that sound? and shall he cry?

"I cannot any more than die;
If wild beasts, limb from limb should tear,
'Tis better far, than starving here.
I am prepared, if death is near,

"Twill end all earthly care."

He cried aloud.

The footsteps cease;
Then nearer, nearer to the place
They drew, while at the door, a face
He saw, and begged for his release.
"Did Heaven to me a rescuer send?"
The man replied, "I am a friend."

The knotted cords were quickly loosed
From arms and ankles, swelled and bruised.
"How came you here, and thus bound too?
Where are you from, and who are you?"
The stranger asked, in deep concern,
The cause of this outrage to learn.
Luther related, to the man,
The story of his greif and pain:
From when the trouble first began,
To their sad fate upon the plain:
The death of daughter and of wife
The blasted home and ruined life.

"I am," the stranger said, "a scout
And known as Deerfoot, here about;
Quite well I know from whence you came,
The place is a resort for game;
All who have been there, will agree
It has a fame for scenery.
I've been there, and your face I know
Remember you, two years ago
A nearly famished man came by?
A hunter drifted to your door.
Wind was blowing, snow was flying,
He fell exhausted on the floor,

Of his exhaustion nearly dying.
'Twas I, you nursed me tenderly;
Forget your hospitality
I surely never can.

But come,
Go with me to my cabin home."
The scout, Deerfoot, led from the place,
He following with languid pace,
Mourning his loss, with sad, sad heart;
Next praising his deliverance,
That Deerfoot happened there by chance:
The scout, some consolation gave
By saying that he soon would start
Upon the trail, and down the knave.
"For all such men so low and bad,
The world is better with them dead.
You were so very kind to me
That I, will your avenger be;
Your wife and child may not be dead,
Those may be lies which he has made."

"Here in my cabin make your home,
In peace and comfort, pray rest you,
Until again, back shall I come;
But rest assured before I do,
From Ben Lane's lips the truth I'll know,
Or lay his wretched carcass low.
Provisions, you will find enough
Here in, although my board is rough.
I cannot loiter with you here,
For every moment now is dear;
Good bye."

He through the door was gone,
And left the man to weep alone.

Over his sorrows would he ponder,
Enduring grief and untold pain:
It bears so heavy on his brain
That mind and man began to wander.
From the log cabin of the scout,
Quite well equipped he started out;
He sought the deepest, darkest glen
The most distant from any men.
He little cared which way he went,
Each day, it seemed more than an age,
Of wandering; his mind was bent,
Upon a life of hermitage.

Sometimes on wide extended plains
Where sage brush grows a tangled net,
And where it never, never rains.
The ground is never, never wet;
A place where no live creatures dwell,
Nothing to quench his craving thirst; •
His head would throb, as though 'twould burst,
His lips would crack, his tongue would swell,
In vain the man sought some retreat
From the hot, burning, scorching heat.

Unable, finally, to stand
He'd lay with face upon the sand.
When the refreshing breeze of eve,
Would partially his pain relieve,
To struggle on, he'd rise again;
And keep on walking, through the night:
The shining stars his guiding light,
To leave behind the barren plain.
Sometimes beside a stream would stand
Within a dreamy fairy land;

Sometimes in the chasms, wierd and deep,
Where Nature, hidden treasures keep.

Here on some mossy bank, he lay,
Beside a clear and flashing stream.
Gaze on the fishes at their play,
Gaze on them, like one in a dream.

He roused himself and seized his gun,
Sprang to his feet to start once more,
With, "God, oh God! Thy will be done."
"This weary life will soon be o'er:
And why, O why! should I thus do?
O'er my sad fate, constant repining;
My wife is, and my daughter too,
On flowery beds of ease reclining.
Why should I mourn over their fate?
Weep constantly o'er scenes of gloom;
They're surely in that happy state,
Where Eden's flowers forever bloom.
So I'll look forward to the day
When I'll throw off this mortal coil,
When Angels bear my soul away
From earth and all its toil."

* * * * *

Upon a scraggy peak commanding.
View, magnificent, enchanting,
A man, a gray haired man was standing,
Nature, was he supplicating?
Nay, not so, though once in sadness
Roamed he in earth's dark recesses;
With despair equal to madness.
When the western breeze caresses
Stricken ones, dethroned of rigor,
Often, impulses awaken,

Thrills the nerves with youthful vigor,
Which for years old age had shaken.

The atmosphere, so strangely drying,
Even tears can't stand the pressure.
Weep, there is no use of trying,
Living has become a pleasure.

On this rock bold and out-spoken,
With his hounds, stood Luther Stanwood.
Three score years, yet looks betoken.
Energy of prime of manhood.

Hark! he hears a distant chorus,
'Tis the Sioux, their war-whoop swelling:
See! oh see! right here before us,
Far below the Redman's dwelling.
See the tepees dim and dusty,
Far below, the village standing,
And their shouts, bloodthirsty, lusty,
Tells, on war, their way were wending.
See the warriors leave their tepees,
Leave their squaws and their papooses.
Always anxious for the melees
Which their yells ever enthuses.

What has caused this scenes tumultuous?
Screeching, running, yelling talking:
Warriors seemingly exultious;
Squaws howling, papooses squawking.

Yonder hillside, there adorning,
In the golden light of morning;
Is a brilliant line arraying;
From savages never swaying.
On them rush the Indian warriors,
Inflicting their savage tortures.

When that savage column towered,
Did they turn and flee like cowards?
Did this band so brave and gallant,
Swerve one jot from being valiant?
Did this little handful tremble,
When they saw they were out numbered?
Did they scatter and dis-semble?
Or by fear were o'er encumbered.

No, with gallantry not deadened
By the overwhelming forces,
Fought they 'till the earth was reddened
By the blood of many courses.

Fierce and long, lasted the battle,
One by one the band kept falling,
Fell and died, butchered like cattle;
'Twas a scene, indeed appalling.

The last man fell, General Custer,
Fell, but falling wept he not;
With what strength that he could muster
Raised and tried another shot.

A bullet crashing through his brain,
Soon streched him on the grass again
To rise no more. His spirit fled,
He and his noble band were dead.

To and fro each warrior passes
O'er the blood soaked sand and grasses,
Yells were rising, falling, swelling,
O'er the dead men, dancing, yelling,
While their lusty howls were ringing,
Bloody scalps in air were swinging,
By warriors held.

The squaws join in,

And help along the fearful din.
In the shadow of the forest,
Two, a silent watch were keeping,
Listening to the fearful chorus,
From their hiding place were peeping;
These he saw from his position
On the rocky precipice;
And he noticed their condition;
Which indeed he could not miss.

Even while the battle lasted;
For their features were contrasted.
Looks and manners showed one out,
To be a thorough western scout.
One was youthful, small and slender,
With expression soft and tender;
Brushed back from the marble brow,
A mass of hair, like driven snow.

From the place where they were hiding,
Watched the terrible affray.
When the tumult was subsiding,
Glided noiselessly away.
Deep into the forest gliding,
Silently they made their way.
In the visage of the older,
Some-thing recollection brought,
It was Deerfoot: Ne'er a bolder,
Braver man in battle fought.
Who could be the white haired stranger?
Certainly no border ranger,
With features of such fine order,
E'er was seen upon the border.
Had Old Deerfoot found the brute?

Scarface's track so well had covered,
Ben's bad deed, had made him rue it,

Lillian he had recovered?

Her face like monumental marble,
Her voice was like the birds that warble;

Her hair, though not like driven snow,
Perhaps the pain she'd undergone
Had made it whiten as his own.

Oh! was it her with him below?

Obscene language and rough cursing,
Insults to which she'd been subject,
'Mong the rough uncultured men
Who drive the Redman from the plain,
Caused her to unsex her person;
If 'twas her that was her object.

"Hasten me, oh, do not loiter,
Mayhap, I have seen my daughter."

Quickly down the rocks descending,
Round the Indian camp went wending;
Lonely in the deep recesses
Of the wild and unknown forest,
Plunged he madly through the forest,
Plunged he through the deep morasses.
For the foot-prints, searching vainly,
Soon the night comes, dark, ungainly.

He lies down to troubled slumbers,
For his thoughts his mind encumbers.
Hopes and fears he could not drown,
In blankets wrapped he lays him down
And there he lay, 'till morning dawn
Lit up the eastern horizon,
Disturbed the shadows in the glen;

Then he arose to search again.

His hounds refused his search to aid,
To scent the tracks could not be made.
He vainly searched the forest through
To find a track or any clue;
But the dry leaves left no trace,
For the wind, the tracks erase.
Hid the tracks of the departed,
Left him sad and heavy-hearted.
With the sun as guide and leader,
Onward went he weeping, crying,
Seeking solace of the cedar,
Of the night wind, moaning, sighing.

Autumn passed and Winter comes,
Winter passed, again the Spring's
Bright flowers bloom; but still he roams
And nothing consolation brings.
Every thing the man reproaches,

On he moves and does not loiter;
One hot day a stream approaches,
Bathes his feet in its cool water.
There he sat in silence, moody,
With his feelings more than broody.

Ah! no longer found he pleasure
In the over hanging mountains,

No enjoyment in the leisure
Lingering 'round the sparkling fountains:

But in silence doth he languish,
Suddenly from out the stillness
Comes a cry of icy chillness;

Comes a cry of sudden anguish.
"Can it be that man has uttered

Such a fearful cry," he muttered;
"Yet it sounds so strangely human
One might think it was a woman."
Once again he hears the shrieking,
'Twas a woman's voice resounding,
'Tis a woman he hears speaking;
O'er the rocks he sees her bounding
With her strange, wild cries still ringing,
From the ledges, she comes springing,
Gracefully the last rock clearing,
In the forest disappearing.
Through the brush he hears her crashing,
On toward him madly dashing;
She stopped, from him, across the stream,
First starting back as if affrighted,
Then stood and gazed as in a dream,
A new fire in her eyes alighted.
A face once beautiful and fair,
Looked into his with curious gaze;
A mass of gray, disheveled hair
Upon her drooping shoulder lays.
In torn and tattered gown, stood she,
In sad and sorrowful condition,
The man imagined he could see
Her look as if in recognition.
"It cannot be! It cannot be!
And yet' it is: 'Tis he! 'Tis he!
My brain! my brain! 'tis whirling, turning;
My blood is boiling, freezing, burning;
My God! I am no longer human,
I'm but a wild and crazy woman.
I'm crazy, now, I see no man,"

And crying wildly, off she ran.
Her voice resounding through the glen-wood,
"Luther Stanwood, Luther Stanwood."

Poor, desolate Luther; hearing
All this moaning, wailing, shrieking,
Sprang, the narrow brooklet clearing
When his name he heard her speaking.
On he dashed like one that's maddened,
Wildly after her departing,
With his heart no longer saddened;—
Stillness of the forest starting,—
And in painful accents shrieking—
"Ellen! Loved one! do not fear!"

But the distant hillsides hear,
And echo back the poor man's speaking.
Soon she left him far behind her,
In the forest, hanging over,
Much he sought, but could not find her,
Till her tracks the dark doth cover.
Then he noticed his condition,
Lacerated feet and bleeding,
Without food which he was needing,
Without gun or ammunition.

Not a moment stopped or stayed he,
Swiftly to the brooklet made he,
Bark into the water tossing,
Way 'twas running, he discovered;
Traced it downward to the crossing
And equipments there recovered.
Weary pacing, heavy hearted
From the canyon soon departed,
Off, through the rocks, he wanders slow,

With languid pace, once more so sad;
Those incidents, so lately, had
Revived the thoughts of long ago.
The memories of the happy past,
And then the sorrow pain and woe,
A shadow o'er the future throw;
The storm cloud gathered thick and fast,
Then it burst in all its fury;
Like a torrent flowed his tears,
And leaning on a boulder, surely
Grief was mingled with his years.

Disconsolate, he sat there, weeping,
With Ellen lost to him forever,
And Lillian without his keeping,
'Till all rejoice beyond Life's river.
When early morn awoke the sun
It found him sitting on a boulder,
It never found a sadder one,
The night had made him ten years older.

Once more he starts back to the stream;
To catch the woman was his aim,
If 'twas his wife, and it would seem,
As though 'twas her that called his name.
He searched the jungle's deep recesses,
Sometimes listening eagerly,
Even his breathing he suppresses;
He even fancies he can see
Her hidden in some darkened nook,
Hears her weeping, wailing, groaning;
She disappears at second look;
The weeping was the pine trees moaning.
Ah! now, he surely hears her singing;

Floating on the gentle breeze
The sweet sounds come, sweetly ringing
And float away among the trees.
He spell-bound listens to the song
As he had done long years before,
How sweetly in his ears it rung;
The same as it once rung of yore.

SONG.

Sweetly at rest with my Father above;
I'll rejoice when I clasp His glad hand;
Where the Father, so tender bestowing His love
On His children throughout all the land.

What a comforting solace to me doth He send,
When our tears shall be dried and sorrows shall end,
And over our slumbers, His vigils He'll keep;
Oh God! let me sleep in that beautiful sleep.

Farewell to the anguish that's bearing me low,
Farewell to the earth and its sorrow and woe,
The dark clouds that hover e'er over my head.
Will scatter and vanish, when I lay cold and dead.

She paused and silence reigned again,
Then there resounded through the glen,
With gentle, quavering, tenor voice,
The second verse which was his choice.
It surely had effect desired,
For ere its latest words were said,
Her eyes the light of Heaven fired;
In terror she no longer fled.

She forward sprang and fainting fell
Into his arms. With beating heart
He clasped her; but we cannot tell
Their joy. They met to never part.

Oh wife rejoice, together we
Shall roam these mountains wild and free,
Until our Lillian we find;
Then leave this wide, wild world behind.
We'll find some elevated land,
Prepared for use by God's own hand,
And dwell where sparkling fountains play
Until in death we pass away.

Our Lillie lives, but she is gone
I know not where. Long, long ago
I saw her face, white as the snow,
With a brave scout, as Deerfoot known.
I, from yon distant mountain height,
Gazed down into a valley fair,
And saw a fearful battle there;
Two others watched the fight.
Deerfoot and Lillie, side by side
Were hidden in the foliage green,
But myself they had not seen,
So, silently away they glide.
And left me desolate and lone;
I could not trace them through the wood,
For in its dreary solitude,
The earth with leaves were strewn."

They stayed a few days in the wood
Recruiting up her broken strength;
When stout enough, they thought, at length;
They start for a high peak that stood,
Within their observation, and
They found near it a tableland.
Perpetually frost and snow
Rests on this grand old mountain peak,
While from its side continuous breaks

A stream down to a lake below.
One side a gentle slope or swell
Made this place quite accessible;
But turning to the other side,
A wondrous view there stretches wide:
Before, a mighty cliff they greet
That drops at least one-thousand feet.
Deep in the canyons, far below,
A dashing stream winds to and fro;
Its head is where the fountains play,
Among the mountains, West and South,
Rapidly running, winds away
Far to the North and finds its mouth.
Upon this elevated plain
A grove of tall straight Pines is seen
 "This is the place where we shall stay."
The old man said. They made their way
Toward a clump of Cedars nigh,
The place that pleased their eye.
They reached the grove, so thick the trees
That one could not progress with ease.
A mountain ivy, seemed to grow
And cover all the earth below,
Even the trees were heavy vined,
As through their boughs the ivy twined;
Still it was but a rod or two
Of this that they must struggle through,
Then to their much astonished gaze,
They came unto an open place,
Within the center of the lot,
A lonely and deserted hut.
They hasten forward to the door
Which open was, upon the floor;

In rags and tatters lay a form
Whose life had scarcely passed away;
Examination showed him warm:
While every thing near where he lay
Was scattered quite promiscuously,
To show he died in agony.
Face downward to the bloody sand
He lay, 'till turned by Luther's hand,
To see who in this place had died.
"My God! 'tis Scarface Ben," he cried:
And true enough, 'twas he indeed
Who 'd caused their aching hearts to bleed.
And in return for ache and pain,
Death wreaked its vengeance on Ben Lane.
His wiry trunk, away they carried,
Alone, his form, in silence buried;
By merely scooping with their hands
A shallow grave, within the sand.
Back to the hut again they drew,
Thoroughly purged it through and through;
As if to cleanse it from all sin:
They fixed the place and dwelt therein.
Without a fear as to their lot,
Leave them in The Deserted Hut.



PART THIRD.

GRAZY WOMAN SONG.

“Ha! Ben, you wished me for a mate,
And that is why my man you hate.
Because I would not be your bride
You tear my chosen from my side;
My husband, aye, my daughter too;
I trust that she escapes from you;
Yes you, the wretch of all vile wretches;
Oh God! grant she escapes your clutches.
Hark! now I think I hear a moan:
No! 'tis the echo of my own.
They left me here, they tho't me dead;
Oh! what a gash is in my head.
Ha! see that Redman standing there,
Don't strike my daughter! have a care,
Don't strike! ah! there, I got the blow;
I am, instead of her, laid low.
If she 's not in captivity,
I'm satisfied if I should die.
My head! My head! My aching brow!
I'm sailing. sailing. sailing now,
Sweet to my ears, some music floats;
It is the orchestra's sweet notes.
Oh what a giddy scene! I'm dazed.
Those brilliant lights: Oh what a scene!
I certainly am quite amazed,

To find me here, robed like a queen;
The flush of youth upon my brow.

The manager a waltz calls, now,
A handsome man glides down the hall,
Stops at my place along the wall.—
'Miss Kemp, my pleasure to enhance,
Will you assist me in this dance.'
Soon, in the waltz, we glided o'er
The smoothly waxed and polished floor.

On Luther's arm, so light I lean
As we whirled through the dizzy scene.
Just as a small, dark man we passed,
My partner to me whispers low,
'I would this could forever last.'
And my reply,—I would it so.—
While o'er my brow, the pleasure flushes,
My beating heart a moment hushes.
We whirl in raptures through the change;
I see Ben Lane's look of revenge.
'Tis first on Luther, then on me;
Luther looks back triumphantly.

The music ceases; once again
I am alone upon the plain.
Ha! out into the forest, I
Shall wander, there to die.
If none my agonizing wail,
Shall hear, none e'er shall know this tale."
Then out into the forest speeding
She plunged 'till limbs were torn and bleeding,
Across the wide extended mains,
The arid undulating plains,
Till in a canyon, by a brook,
The frosts of winter overtook.

Until the birds again should come,
She in a cavern made her home;
In loneliness, to soothe her pain
Until the flowers bloom again,
Then the cold and cruel winter,
'Round the cavern seemed to center;
And the air grew colder, colder,
And the wind blew fiercer bolder;
Through the forest, over river,
Come a fierce and howling blizzard;
And the woman sat and shivered.
Often to her ears came floating
Sounds, that seemed like some one shouting;
Father! mother! it seemed calling,
Through the snow that fast was falling.
In her torture, great, she shuddered,
Scarce a word she ever uttered
'Till herself, she could not hold her,
Bounding out o'er rock and boulder,
Thro' the pines and in the cedar,
On and on, her haste would lead her,
Calling, "Lillian, my daughter!"
And in painful accents shrieking;
But the echo only brought her,
Moaning words the winds were speaking.
Involuntarily she shuddered,
Incoherently she muttered;
Backward to the cavern turning,
In her heart an aching, burning;
E'en the very forests languish
In the crazy woman's anguish.
With her cold skeleton fingers
Raked together dying embers.

This heat with her animation
Kept her blood in circulation.
Thus she lived on, or existed,
All the elements resisted,
Freezing, starving, yea ill-faring,
Inch by inch, was slowly dying.
Of life heedless, little caring
If death came, to end her sighing.

Oh! the spring is coming, surely,
For the tempests loose their fury.
Once she in the brush was standing,
Far away, beheld two footmen,
Carelessly their way were wending
To the spot, where stood the woman;
And by their sight, so deep engrossed,
Her motive powers, completely lost.
Advanced they slowly, hand in hand
Till face to face with her they stand.

"My God!" one cried, "of human creatures
Whom to meet has been my share,
Most woe-begone distorted features,
None have ever equaled her."
But White Hair gazed so tenderly
Upon that face which once was fair;
As though he e'en half fancied, he
Could recognize, her standing there.
With wild, wild shriek away she ran;
Pursuing after her, the men.
Up! up! o'er rocks and boulders flying,
Ever shrieking, ever crying,
Then down a steep green mountain slope,
She bounded like an antelope.
Went plunging through the copse and bush,

Fell fainting in the underbrush.
But, springing from its place of ease,
And rest beneath the forest trees,
A frightened deer went speeding on,
The two pursuers, leading on,
Led by the sound and not by sight.
At last the sounds all died away;
Bruised, bleeding, from the place she lay,
Arose, still panting in her fright,
And glided quietly away.

Later, upon a rock she stood,
Her eyes turned to the deep dense wood.
A lightening impulse o'er her ran,
With dizzy, whirling brain, began
To scream.

Away she madly dashed,
Down, down, into the canyon deep;
The rough decent, the slope was steep;
Into the under-brushes crashed,
Stopped, gazed across a narrow stream,
Beheld a man as in a dream.
"My husband! Luther! it is he."
She raised her hands imploringly,
Rubbed her eyes, again to see,
Then said, "no! no! it cannot be;
I see no man, my lot is sad,
By overwhelming anguish mad."
Away she ran, into the wood
Not knowing that she was pursued.
One day in melancholy mood,
By sorrow was her soul imbued,
As on a grassy swarth she lay,
She sang a sad and mournful song;

The song with Heavenly comfort fraught,
Brought hope that life would not be long.
Her husband was not far away
When she began her mournful lay.
With heavy heart, that's filled with pain,
He hears the agonizing strain,
And when its latest words were sung
His own voice through the forest rung,
Her words he echoes on the breeze,
Like seraphs singing in the trees,
The sweetest words that mortal tongue
Has ever into music wrung.

And with a wail
She forward sprang and fainting fell.
The crazy woman of the vale,
Thus ends her sorrows in the dell.



PART FOURTH.

WHITE HAIR AND DEERFOOT.

They rode together, side by side,
From early dawn, 'till eventide;
But once dismounting, steeds to rest,
And then the sun was in the west.
Without a word, a little vial,
Old Deerfoot from his pocket drew,
And forward stepped, with curious smile,
Began to wet those ringlets through.
Thoroughly doth he saturate
The raven ringlets on her pate.
"The cause of this you soon shall know."
He turned to where his horse was tied.
Before her locks again had dried,
They turned as white as mountain snow.
"Come. let us mount and onward go."
With tight girthed horses, on they ride,
At evening, they overtook
Some cowboys; camped down by a brook.
The foreman forth to them advances,
With friendly smile old Deerfoot greets,
Then at the white haired youth, he glances,
Unconsciously, a step retreats,

Then forward takes a step or so,
Whilst to his friend he whispers low.
Deerfoot whence came this vuchero?
Booted, spurred and broad sombrero.
The long white hair in wavy curls,
I'd almost swear they were a girls."
"I most forgot," old Deerfoot said
This is White Hair, a fearless lad.
He taken, was, by Spotted Tail,
When but a kid. His hair was white;
That is what pleased old Spotted Tail
He thought to train him up to fight.
For when they had their war-paint on,
The chieftain would exclaim to them,
There goes the prophet of the Sun;
Leave me my braves and follow him.'
He heard them plotting there one day:
His blood was white; it made it boil;
He tho't, 'your cursed plans I'll foil.
Or try, that's all I have to say.'
And so the pesky little scamp
Just watched his chance and left the camp,
He came and told me of the trick;
We'll make them blasted redskins sick,
Or else I miss my guess;

That's all.

They plot for General Custer's fall.
They have a devilish trap, now set.
The bird, they haven't captured yet;
If these good horses stay with us
We'll be in time to save the muss;
If they give out beneath our weight
Perhaps we'll be to late.

We've rode full ninety miles since morn.
A long hard ride sure as your born.
"With not a bite to eat at all
Since morn?" He called out to the cook,
(Wyoming's champion, Muldoon.)
Quickly responding to his call,
Around the fire, his way he took,
Had them a supper ready soon.
They supped and soon retired for night;
'Woke, breakfasted, before daylight.
'Twas early in the morning gray,
They mount their steeds and ride away,
First, to their saddle bags they tie
Provisions, a three days supply.
The journey, which they had begun
For three long days they journcyed on.
The third night, 'neath the forest trees,
They rest in quietude and ease.
"Tomorrow e'er the sun doth rise,
On Custer, we shall have our eyes;
Off to his forces. hasten we,
Prevent the fearful massacre:
Finish the work, assigned to me,
Which was began by brave White Hair."
Before the morning sunlight shines
They see the blue-coats forming lines,
Upon a hill not far ahead.
Their well worn steeds they tied and fed,
Then Deerfoot bade White Hair be still;
For this he called the maiden fair
Since he had dyed her raven hair;
And she obeyed his will.
He started off toward the hill.

Alas! the battle had begun!
The glittering lines they plainly see,
The gallantry those soldier shone
Was truly glorious chivalry.
With unabated fury raged
The battle for an hour or more:
In watching was White Hair engaged,
And listening to its fearful roar.
Like animals, to see brave men
Shot down, before her very ken,
To hear the Redman's frenzied yell,
To see them swinging in the air
The bloody scalps, the matted hair
Of brave men who before them fell.

The fearful sounds, at last subside,
The last brave soldier, now was dead:
Their corpses scattered far and wide,
The earth with human gore was red.

“Here Deerfoot comes and I am glad
For I had feared his safety;

Of this scene, I, enough have had
To make me shake with misery.”

“We were to late,”—old Deerfoot said,—

“But quickly hither let us flee;

Of Custer and his brave, brave dead;

Ah! we shall their avengers be.”

They mount their ponies, off they fly,
Up! Up! the forward landscape scans,
But nothing meets their searching eye.
With glowing cheeks and flashing kens,
To right and left, their steeds they rein,
Thro' wilderness and o're the main.

All day they ran, all night they rode,
O'er prairie wide, through denser wood.
As to a cabin door they rode,—
"This," Deerfoot said, "is my abode.
'Twas in this rustic place, I left
Your father dear, sadly bereft.
In yonder cavern, cold and gray,
I laid poor White Hair's form away;
You look some like him, though not tall
Enough by two inches or more.
A reckless lad, tho' that last fall;
'Twas yonder cliff he tumbled o'er.
'Twas he who in the tepees dwelt
Among papposes, squaws and braves,
'Twas he the longing impulse felt
The white men, of the plans, to tell.
That meant to lead them to their graves;
Prevent the fearful work of hell.
As you somewhat resembled him,
Your hair to dye, I thought it best:
You take the place of him at rest.
May be it was a foolish whim
Of mine; but then, I guess you know
What a disgraceful thing 'twould be
If you about with me would go,
To have your dress and sex agree.
Of course you will agree with me.
For e'er you in the right hands fall,
We certainly are liable
A hundred men to see.
That's why this hunter's suit I gave,
That you might thus your sex disguise,

Your character from censure save,
By so deceiving human eyes."
They found the cabin desolate.
No one had near it, been of late.
"Your father has abandoned me,
The cabin is deserted quite,
Or else, in his dispondency,
Went out to wander day and night;
A little note to him I'll write
And put it on the cabin door,
So if he comes this way once more
He'll know that you're allright."

This done they left the solitude,
But soon they found they were pursued;
Then the exciting race began,
On up the mount their chargers ran,
When in his saddle Deerfoot turned,
Raised to his eye his rifle "Trust,"
The echoes bounded and returned,
Each time a warrior "bit the dust."
Assistance he did not expect.
But she reached for his short carbine,
And used it with deadly effect,
With calm, cool and collected mein.
With flashing eye and flushing brow,
Old Deerfoot's vow. repeated she:—
"We shall the dead's avengers be;—
Like hail, they fall before us now."
At length, so dense the thickets grow,
Their jaded horses could not go.
Dismounted, in their haste retreat,
Their way for Providence to show,

And with the fleetness of their feet
Escape the clutches of the foe.

Fear of pursuit they have no need,
For after capturing each steed,
The warriors quickly made away.
Deerfoot and White Hair lost no time,
Nor in the thicket long did stay,
But o'er the mountain tops they climb.
Toward the western mountains, gray,
To Powder river made their way.
Upon its bank a hut they made
A rock was its foundation laid,
Its walls of stone, were laid up high,
With one small doorway:

Standing by

With over-hanging boughs a tree,
Which formed the part of canopy.
The winter, desolate and bleak,
Closed 'round them in this humble home,
And rested on each mountain peak.
Until, again, the flowers come.
But with the wakening of the spring,
Once more began their wandering.
As down the canyon deep they glide
One day, in a wild, rocky place;
Not far before them, they espied
A hideous figure, face to face.
With earnest, eager searching gaze,
She careful scrutinized each face.
Then darted off with woeful wail,
They following downward through the vale.
So thick the underbrushes rise
On her they could not keep their eyes.

But by the sounds away are led,
'Till they discover close ahead,
No woman but a deer instead.
They were returning to the spot
Where first they saw the é crazy woman;
They heard a shriek, they knew not what
Whether beast or fiend, or human.
And Deerfoot said:—"Remain you here
The cause of that, I will discover;
If 'tis the woman lingering near
Her tracks we yet may cover."

Old Deerfoot never came again,
His fate was never, never learned;
Perhaps a beast the man has slain:
He certainly never returned.
No more would his protection give
To her, its ever gentle care,
A solitary being live
To wander off, she knew not where.
Fully awakened to a sense
Of her responsibility,
Prepares a journey to commence,
And did so with facility.
Thus well equipped with gun and knife
Upon a journey started she,
Determined to defend her life
In case of an emergency,
Though curious incidents were rife,
She met with a contingency.
She stood beside a crystal lake
Which quiet lay in Nature's mold,
Never a sound the stillness break;

Around her silence wrapped its fold.
She hears a voice, and at its sound
She starts, and quickly turns around,
Surprised; for there upon the green
A silver haired couple, were seen,
The maid could scarce believe her eyes,—
“Oh father, mother!” quickly cries.

When they beheld this white haired maiden,
Toward them thro’ the brakes fast running,
Their hearts with woe no longer laden,
Beat with rapture at her coming.
She clasp them both in her embrace
And showered kisses on each face.
The greeting o’er, their steps retrace,
Back to their new abiding place.
While she related to their ears,
The story of her grief and tears.
From when she left the canyon grand,
“Till meeting on the tableland.
Then each, in turn, reflection cast
Upon the agonies of the past,
“This union would be stranger still,
If we should ever find our Will.
We’ll trust in Providence to lead
Him here, if he is living still;
And may that day the Heavens speed,
When Deerfoot for his noble deed,
Receives his just reward.

But lass,
Did e’er you see so nice a place?”
They brush aside the branches green,
There in the center of the wood,

Resting in quietude serene,
A huge Sod Cabin stood.
And never, never more to roam,
We leave them in their mountain home.



PART FIFTH.

THE MOUNTAIN KISS.

[In the Rocky Gap.]

“Awake! awake! the sun rolls high,
It shines from yonder fleecy sky,
Upon my resting place doth break,
And whispers to my soul awake.
This is the spot, the lonely spot,
Where they should be, and yet, are not.
This mountain stream where rainbows play,
These rugged hills, the rocky way,
Twin Mountains standing side by side,
Ball Mountain’s head have I espied,
Away toward the Horse Creek lakes;
And to the north-east, far away
Rears Laramie’s head, so cold and gray.

This day of all I’ve held most dear,
For we had planned a meeting here;
I’m ready for the meeting near.”

* * * * *

“Not coming yet? What can it mean?
How rapidly the day declines!

I'll rest upon this swarth so green
Beneath the shade of these tall pines.
How fast the evening sunlight wanes;
Why, I'm all excitement now!
I'll climb to see them on the plains,
By gazing from the mountain brow.
The day is past, the sun has set;
I look, but cannot see them yet.
They would not disappoint me so,
Unless something they did not know
Has happ'd;

Some tale of trouble tells
Its story in those lovely dells.
Three days, shall I await them here,
If at the end, they are not near,
My many steps, will I retrace
Once more, back to that distant place."

Back again

"I'm back again! 'Tis like a dream;
There lies the lake in quietude.
Here flashes on, the sparkling stream;
Birds merrily sing in the wood."
The cedar grove stands to the right,
And he approaches cautiously.
"The cabin is deserted quite,
No signs of life about I see.
The door swings back and forth, with ease,
Moved gently by the stirring breeze.
My God! The sight that meets my gaze!
The scene is one of strange disorder:
While in confusion all things lay,
And blood, which makes me think that murder
Has been committed in this dell.

Yes Scarface is the brute or beast,
That did the dirty work of hell,
His savage heart's desire to feast.
But, where are they, whom he has slain?
He's dragged them forth upon the plain,
Their carcasses have made a feast
For vultures, or some hungry beast.
The man and woman has been slain:
He's taken Lill with him away,
To make her lead a life of pain,
To wear her precious life away.
I'll follow him, I'll search the mounts
Until revenge on him I've had.
Until his blood has made a fount,
And by my hand I see him dead.

Oh! curse the brute that mars the lives
Of happiness, as he has done,
To desperation, me it drives
I'll end the work he has begun."
This curse upon his lips, he starts,
And from the lake and glen departs.

[In the mountains.]

Ho! hear the herald of the morn.
Ho! hear the deep bay of the hounds:
And loudly rings the hunters horn,
The wild stag from the jungle bounds,
Across the stream and up the steep,
It bounds along with shambling leap.

From binding chains the hounds are freed,
They dash through bush and briar and brake;
Will Curtis springs, upon his steed
While mountain echoes, startling wake.
Away toward the hill, the stag

Leads 'till Will's steed begins to lag.
He tho't to capture it. at last,
When in a narrow gulch it passed;
For on all sides were towering high,
The mighty walls of solid stone;
Its canopy the pale blue sky,
And no egress except this one.
He heard the sounds receding far
Back, back into the canyon there,
From panting horse, dismounted he,
And calmly sits upon the ground;
Waits the return of deer and hound,
But vainly for them waited he.
At last he heard approaching him
The distant sounds, though they were dim.
They came not past him, but instead
Were on a ledge high over-head.
First, up the rocky height he gazed,
Then at the running deer he blazed.
His frightened horse bounds from his side,
Around the rock below it hied;
Left him not knowing what to do,
The horse or deer, which to pursue.
Determining the deer upon,
Along the ledge the chase began,
The deer and hound together run,
At distance, followed by the man.
Higher, higher up the steep,
A yawning chasm, do they leap;
Wild. dangerous passes do they meet.
To fall, was fall one thousand feet.
Farther. farther up the height,
Brain was whirling, head was light,

The scene the stoutest heart appalls:
He closed his eyes,—he falls—he falls!—
But no; with fearful energy
He over-throws the mighty spell;
Look not the dizzy height to see,
Up! up! and everything is well.
But to retreat, a step to miss
Was death beneath the precipice.
The dizzy height was reached at last;
“Thank God,” he said “the danger’s past,
I’ve lost my horse, my deer, my hound,
But what a wondrous place I’ve found.”
“That grove of Cedars towering tall,
With mountain ivy overgrown;
Pink flowers mixed with white and grey,
Upon the clinging ivy vines,
Which ’mong the verdant Cedar twines,
Makes a magnificent boquet.
The crystal lake, the waterfall,
The mountain grass by breezes blown.”
As if the mountain glen, to wake
From sleep, he blew a mighty call.
The sound vibrated to the lake
And echoed round the waterfall.
The ivy on the Cedar trees
Shook, as if shaken by the breeze.
It parts; he saw a fairy maid
Of purest type, beneath its shade.
One can’t imagine his surprise;
He scarcely could believe his eyes,
But quickly drops behind the grass
To watch the pretty mountain lass.
“I heard a blast, and one I knew,

I've heard the same in days gone by,"
She said;

It thrilled him through and through.
He oft had seen that flashing eye,
That marble brow, with hair bedecked
So gracefully; and form erect.

"Oh Lillie, is it you?" He cried,
And forward bounded to her side.
A moment stood she in a daze,
But one small moment did she gaze,
And sprang to meet him then.
The greeting was a joyous one;
It paid for o'er a year of pain.
Oh praises to the Guiding One,
To lead and join them heart and hand,
Upon this fairy tableland.
While standing there in close embrace,
Emotion nigh unspeakable,
Joy pictured was, upon each face,
The tender words of love they tell,
Those trembling words, so rapturous,
They spoke of future bliss.
Toward the cabin went they now,
Beneath the ivy covered bough.
Within the center of the wood,
A huge, well build Sod Cabin stood.
And scattered o'er it entwines
Thin fabric of the ivy vines,
Thickly around the door doth lurk
Upon a kind of lattice work.
They were in bloom: a lovelier sight
Was never seen on mountain height.
They entered in the cabin door,

They greet, a joyful cry;
And tears, at meeting Will once more,
Fell from each happy eye.
While thus their hearts together blend,
The four in love and unity,
And, why not leave them in the glen,
To know no more of misery.
And never may a shadow send
Its gloom upon this group again.
But of their future, let us say
That it was never mared with pain;
They dwelt where bright the fountains play
Until the flowers bloomed again.
Quite often 'round the lake resound,
Awakening with the early morn,
The neighing steed, the baying hound
The sharp vibrating of the horn.
One year had passed, again springtime
Had come.

They, as the spring advanced
Left for the vast inheritance
Awaiting in an eastern clime.

* * * * *

Now in that stately, queenly hall,
Upon the summit of the hill,
With brilliant splendor 'round them all,
Reside the Prairie Rose and Will.
While both their parents with them dwell,
Tales of the past they love to tell.
Sometimes when Lillie, musing sits,
A dreamy mist before her flits,
And to her, sleeping memories come,
Fair visions of a highland home:

While all the gilded marble halls
Have been transformed to sodded walls.
Her frescoed ceiling fades away
To rough hewn poles and boughs and hay.
More thickly grows the midst before;
She stands upon the lakelet's shore:
She sees the swan upon the deep;
She sees the wavelets toss and leap.
The lake, a sheet of living fire
Lay flashing thus in Nature's mould
Ah, one could look, and never tire,
Upon this molten sea of gold.

While standing, musing, she espied
From 'neath the cedars at one side,
A tall, fair man silently glide
And take his station at her side.
Who was that man with soft blue eyes,
As gentle as the turtle dove?
'Twas Will,—her Will,—her own true love,—
This was no dream of paradise,
For Will was standing near:
The dream was past, and all was clear.
“The dream is past, let joy abound,
And mirth and merriment resound.”
“Farewell, sweet mountain glen;
Farewell, forever more.

The horn and hoand no longer blend
Their chorus as we speed thee o'er;
No human hand shall come to break
The silence 'round the crystal lake,
No neigh of steed, no hunters call
Shall echo 'round the waterfall,
The cabin stands alone.

Again . . .

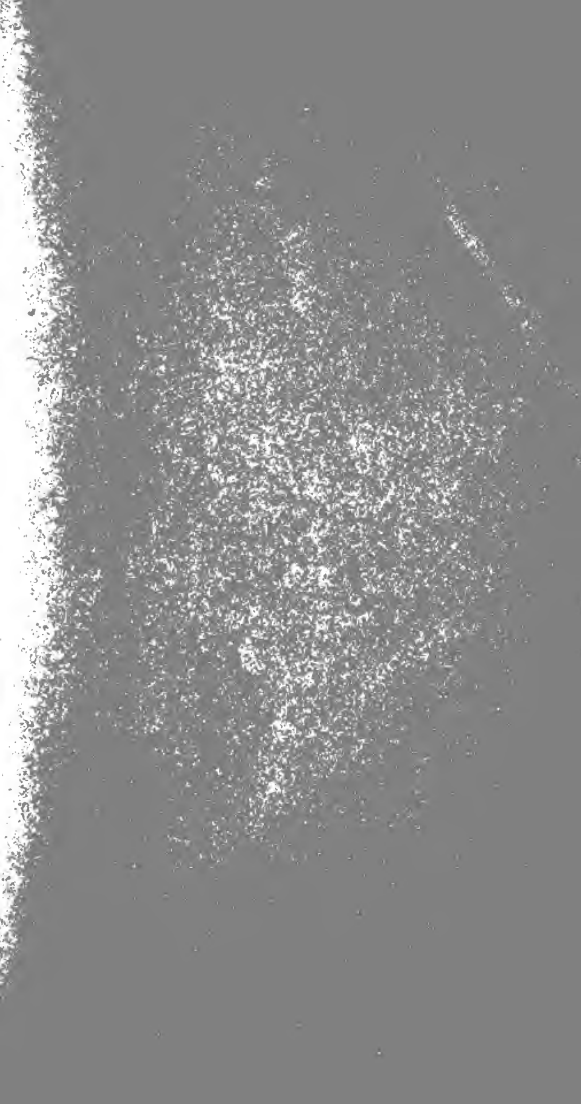
I bid farewell to thee, sweet glen."
Since then the mountain fires swept o'er
And burned the ivy from the door,
The rotting door-frame stands alone
Save idly swainng door, with moan;
Its hinges coated o're with rust:
The walls have crumbled into dust.

THE END, . . .









LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 015 971 997 2

